

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for retrieving documents in a computer network, the method
2 comprising:
3 receiving an indication of a document selection performed by a user, the
4 document selection identifying a desired file reference contained within a document
5 displayed to the user;
6 in response to receiving the indication of the document selection, displaying to
7 the user a list of one or more selectable data exchange modes;
8 determining a data exchange mode selected by the user for the desired file
9 reference; and
10 ensuring that a request to retrieve data associated with the desired file
11 reference from a server is in accordance with the selected data exchange mode.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said ensuring further comprises:
2 modifying one or more configuration parameters of an Internet browser in
3 accordance with the selected data exchange mode; and
4 restoring the one or more configuration parameters of the Internet browser
5 upon processing the request for data associated with the desired file reference.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein said ensuring further comprises:

modifying the request issued by an Internet browser in accordance with the data exchange mode selected by the user.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

in response to receiving the indication of the document selection, associating a previously identified preferred data exchange mode with the desired file reference unless detecting that the user has performed an action sequence indicating a user selection of a data exchange mode other than the previously identified preferred data exchange mode.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the action sequence indicating the user selection of the data exchange mode other than the preferred data exchange mode includes a user interaction with any one of a cursor control device and a keyboard key.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the user selection of the data exchange mode affects only the data associated with the desired file reference.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected data exchange mode affects any one of the amount of user-specific information sent with the request, the amount of data sent by the server in response to the request, and the format of data sent by the server in response to the request.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the server is a network server storing the data
2 associated with the desired file reference.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein:
2 the server is a proxy that communicates with a network server storing the data
3 associated with the desired file reference; and
4 said ensuring further comprises the proxy modifying the request for
5 data when required by the selected data exchange mode, and the proxy
6 modifying data received from the network server when required by the
7 selected data exchange mode.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein the request for data sent to the proxy contains
2 an identifier of the selected data exchange mode.

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein said ensuring further comprises:
2 sending a request to retrieve data associated with the desired file reference to
3 a first server, the request conforming to the selected data exchange mode;
4 receiving a response from the first server, the response indicating a new
5 location of the data associated with the desired file reference; and
6 automatically issuing a second request to a second server using the new
7 location, the second request conforming to the selected data exchange mode.

1 12. The method of claim 1 wherein:

2 data associated with the desired file reference is stored on a plurality of
3 servers; and

4 said ensuring further comprises sending a request to each of the plurality of
5 servers, the request conforming to the selected data exchange mode.

1 13. The method of claim 1 wherein said ensuring further comprises:

2 including an identifier of the selected data exchange mode; and

3 sending the request with the identifier of the selected data exchange mode to a
4 first proxy.

1 14. The method of claim 13 further comprising:

2 the first proxy selecting a second proxy as a recipient of the request based on
3 the identifier of the selected data exchange mode and a predefined set of operations
4 performed by the second proxy.

1 15. The method of claim 13 further comprising:

2 the first proxy taking responsibility for performing a first portion of
3 operations required by the selected data exchange mode; and

4 the first proxy selecting a second proxy for performing a second portion of
5 operations required by the selected data exchange mode.

1 16. The method of claim 15 further comprising:

2 the first proxy updating the identifier of the data exchange mode with an
3 identifier value associated with the second portion of operations; and
4 the first proxy sending the request with the updated identifier value to the
5 second proxy.

1 17. A method for retrieving documents in a computer network, the method
2 comprising:

3 receiving an indication of a data exchange mode chosen by a user for a desired
4 file reference;

5 determining, based on the data exchange mode, whether data associated with
6 the desired file reference should be retrieved directly from a destination network
7 server storing the data; and

8 when the data should not be retrieved directly from the destination server,
9 directing a request for data to a proxy for a modification in accordance with the data
10 exchange mode.

1 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the modification in accordance with the data
2 exchange mode affects any one of the amount of user-specific information sent with
3 the request, the amount of data sent by the server in response to the request, and the
4 format of data sent by the server in response to the request

1 19. The method of claim 17 wherein the data should not be retrieved directly from
2 the destination server if the data exchange mode requires modifying either the
3 request for data or the data retrieved from the destination server.

1 20. The method of claim 17 further comprising:
2 the proxy sending the request to the destination network server, the request
3 conforming to the data exchange mode;
4 the proxy receiving the data associated with the desired file reference from the
5 destination computer; and
6 the proxy modifying the data when required by the data exchange mode.

1 21. The method of claim 17 wherein directing the request for data to the proxy
2 further comprises:
3 identifying one of a plurality of proxies as a recipient of the request; and
4 sending the request to said one of the plurality of proxies.

1 22. The method of claim 21 wherein:
2 at least one of the plurality of proxies performs a predefined set of operations;
3 and
4 said identifying is based on the predefined set of operations and the data
5 exchange mode.

1 23. The method of claim 17 further comprising:
2 adding additional information to the request sent to at least one of the
3 plurality of proxies, the additional information including an identifier of the data
4 exchange mode.

1 24. A system for retrieving documents in a computer network, the system
2 comprising:
3 a data exchange mode identifier to receive an indication of a document
4 selection performed by a user, the document selection identifying a desired file
5 reference contained within a document displayed to the user, and to determine a
6 data exchange mode selected by the user for the desired file reference; and
7 a request modifier to ensure that a request to retrieve data associated with the
8 desired file reference from a server is in accordance with the selected data exchange
9 mode.

1 25. The system of claim 24 wherein determination of the data exchange mode
2 remains valid only for the data associated with the desired file reference, and is
3 updated after receiving indication of the next document selection by the user.

1 26. A system for retrieving documents in a computer network, the system
2 comprising:

1 a data exchange mode identifier to receive an indication of a data exchange
2 mode chosen by a user for a desired file reference; and
3 a destination coordinator to determine, based on the data exchange mode,
4 whether data associated with the desired file reference should be retrieved directly
5 from a destination network server storing the data, and to direct a request for data to
6 a proxy when the data should not be retrieved directly from the destination server.

1 27. The system of claim 26 wherein data exchange mode used by the destination
2 coordinator remains valid only for the data associated with the desired file reference,
3 and is updated for the next desired file reference.

1 28. A computer readable medium that provides instructions, which when
2 executed on a processor, cause said processor to perform operations comprising:
3 receiving an indication of a document selection performed by a user, the
4 document selection identifying a desired file reference contained within a document
5 displayed to the user;
6 in response to receiving the indication of the document selection, displaying to
7 the user a list of one or more selectable data exchange modes;
8 determining a data exchange mode selected by the user for the desired file
9 reference; and
10 ensuring that a request to retrieve data associated with the desired file
11 reference from a server is in accordance with the selected data exchange mode.

1 29. A computer readable medium that provides instructions, which when
2 executed on a processor, cause said processor to perform operations comprising:
3 receiving an indication of a data exchange mode chosen by a user for a desired
4 file reference;
5 determining, based on the data exchange mode, whether data associated with
6 the desired file reference should be retrieved directly from a destination network
7 server storing the data; and
8 when the data should not be retrieved directly from the destination server,
9 directing a request for data to a proxy for a modification in accordance with the data
10 exchange mode.